

the guardian weekly

February 2012

Level » Lower intermediate
Style » Lesson plan



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: advanced and lower intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

Headphones are a danger to life, study finds

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

Instructions

Lesson focus: reading, telling anecdotes

Materials: article

Time: 55 minutes

- Ask: Who has an MP3 player? Get a volunteer to come to the front. Write on the board: *when, where, why, what, how often*. The other students work in pairs and prepare some questions to ask the student about their MP3 player, for example *Where do you listen to it?* The class interviews the student. **12 mins**
- Write up the headline: *Headphones are a danger to life, study finds*. Establish: *headphones, danger, life and study*. Ask students what they think the article is about. **3 mins**
- Direct students to task 1. Students match the verbs and nouns from the text. Class feedback. Do they have any more ideas about the article now? **8 mins**

a [] wear	1 to your iPod
b [] listen	2 the street
c [] talk	3 headphones
d [] cross	4 attention
e [] hear	5 serious injuries
f [] pay	6 on your mobile
g [] suffer	7 warnings

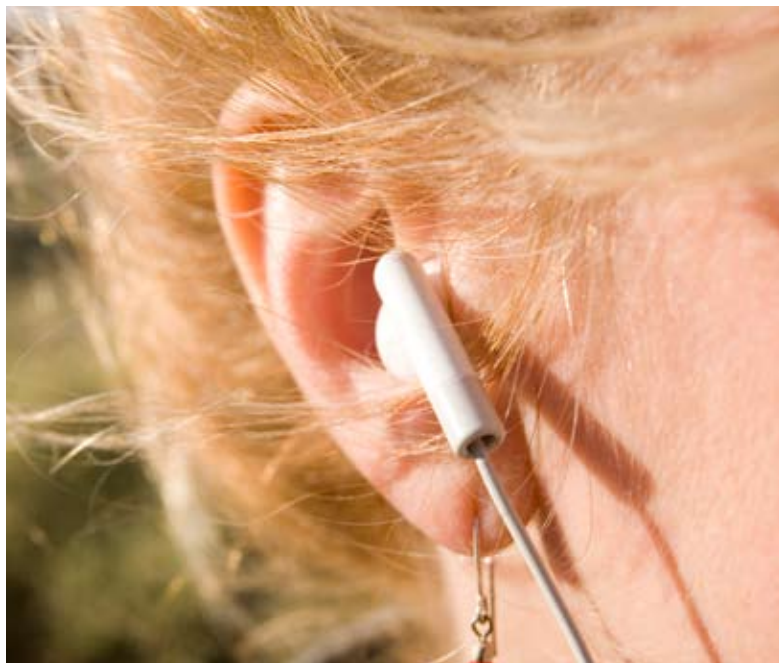
Answers: a 3 b 1 c 6 d 2 e 7 f 4 g 5
- Go through the sentences in task 2. Students read the article and choose the correct underlined words. **12 mins**
 - A British/American study looked at people's injuries while using headphones.
 - The number of injuries increased three/four times in six months/years.
 - The victims were mostly female/male and less/more than 30 years old.
 - In 70% of the cases the victims died/were seriously injured.
 - The main problem is that users can't hear other pedestrians/warnings.
 - The problem of "iPod oblivion" has been found in a number of countries/studies.

Answers: a American **b** three, years **c** male, less **d** died **e** warnings **f** studies
- Give an example of when you had a "near miss" or minor accident while wearing headphones etc for example: "I was talking on my mobile when I walked into a bench." If possible show students the video clip of a woman falling into a fountain at: bbc.in/zSZrCn Students narrate: She was texting when she suddenly fell into a fountain. **5 mins**
- Students prepare an anecdote about a similar incident that happened to them and include these details: the time, date, place, weather, main incident, their feelings afterwards. Monitor. **5 mins**
- Revise intonation for expressions of surprise (really!) and sympathy (oh dear). In pairs students tell each other the anecdotes. The listener must respond appropriately. Monitor, give brief feedback. Students swap partners/ repeat. **10 mins**

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Materials sheet



Warning 'iPod oblivion' risk Ian Shive/Getty

Student tasks

1 Match these verbs and nouns from the text.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| a [] wear | 1 to your iPod |
| b [] listen | 2 the street |
| c [] talk | 3 headphones |
| d [] cross | 4 attention |
| e [] hear | 5 serious injuries |
| f [] pay | 6 on your mobile |
| g [] suffer | 7 warnings |

2 Read the article and choose the correct underlined words.

- a A British/American study looked at people's injuries while using headphones.
- b The number of injuries increased three/four times in six months/years.
- c The victims were mostly female/male and less/more than 30 years old.
- d In 70% of the cases the victims died/were seriously injured.
- e The main problem is that users can't hear other pedestrians/warnings.
- f The problem of "iPod oblivion" has been found in a number of countries/studies.

Article: Headphones are a danger to life, study finds

- 1 Walking with your head in the clouds can be dangerous - but not as perilous as listening to your iPod. The number of people suffering serious injury or death while wearing headphones for MP3 players has tripled in six years, according to a US study.
- 2 An increase in the use of headphones while walking in the street has led to a dramatic rise in the number of injuries, with teenagers, men and young adults the most at risk from hurting themselves.
- 3 In the study, experts looked at data from 2004 to 2011. They found that 116 people in the US wearing headphones had died or been seriously hurt during that period. The number of people who died or were injured jumped from 16 in 2004-05 to 47 in 2010-11.
- 4 Most victims were men (68%) and under the age of 30 (67%), with about one in 10 of all cases under the age of 18.
- 5 According to the study, in the online journal Injury Prevention, 70% of the incidents resulted in death. The study found that wearing headphones may have played a direct part in many of the accidents, because the users could not hear warnings that they were in danger.
- 6 The experts concluded: "The use of headphones ... may pose a safety risk to pedestrians, especially in environments with moving vehicles."
- 7 Other studies have found that people wearing headphones - or who are talking on a mobile phone - can suffer from "inattention blindness" or "iPod oblivion". This is a reduction in attention to the outside world and it can lead to people paying less attention to traffic when they cross the street.
- 8 Kevin Clinton, the head of road safety at the UK Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, advised pedestrians with headphones to: "Ensure you are not dangerously distracted and that you remain aware of what is happening around you."

Original article by Alexandra Topping, rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould